

Queen and Woman

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FOR REFERENCE

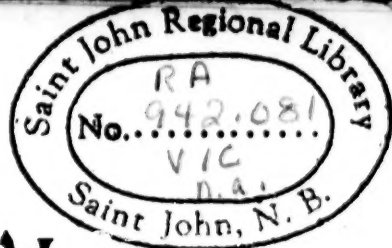
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NOT TO BE TAKEN FROM THE ROOM

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Victoria, Queen and Woman

REV. D. J. FRASER, B.D.



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TO MY PEOPLE
THIS SERMON
IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED

Victoria: Queen and Woman

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PROVERBS, XVI. 12 :

*"The throne is established by righteousness."*

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DURING these days of national rejoicing over the long and glorious reign of our Sovereign, our thoughts naturally turn to the wonderful material progress which has characterized the Victorian Era. It is with pardonable pride and genuine gratitude that we recall the military and naval greatness of our nation; the extent, resources and capabilities of our colonies; the discoveries of these three-score years which have made for us a new heaven and a new earth; the inventions which have facilitated labor and annihilated space; the sciences which have relieved the sufferings of God's creation; and the arts which have beautified our life and enriched our thought. These are all the blessings of God for which we should be devoutly thankful. But on this day of religious jubilee, these are not the things which demand our chiefest thought and inspire our warmest gratitude. Material prosperity is not the secret of national greatness. Righteousness it is which really and per-

manently exalteth a nation. Moral rather than material causes govern the growth and decline of states. Not by territorial acquisition, nor by military successes, nor by social splendor, is the throne established. These may be present and yet the national heart be sick and the national strength waning. But the throne is established by righteousness; and at our jubilee service to-day the minds of all of us turn instinctively to the person of our Gracious Queen, whose life has ever presented an unstained example of goodness to the human race, and who finds that her throne has been thereby firmly established in the hearts of her loving and loyal subjects. Here under the shade of holy thought, we recall not so much the length and brilliancy as the goodness of her reign. Right is might; and if Great Britain is the most powerful empire in the world to-day, it is because it stands for what is best in western civilization; and that it does so stand for the progress of the principles of christian civilization is due in no small measure to the womanly queen who for sixty years has wielded the sceptre of righteousness, and the queenly woman whose personal piety and domestic simplicity have been a wholesome example to her people. As a queen, she has done justly and loved mercy: as a woman, she has walked humbly with God.

Queenliness and womanliness—these were lessons which she early learned. It would be hard for us to overestimate the debt which our nation owes to Baron Stockmar, the political tutor of the Queen in her early life. Although occupying no official position, this sagacious and farseeing

man had come to be one of the chief unseen political forces of Europe ; and that, by reason of his personal honesty and disinterestedness no less than his clear vision as a statesman. His education of the young Princess for her high position is full of significance. In it we find the ideals which were placed before the mind of the Queen as a girl, and by loyalty to which she has shed a lustre on her nation. His creed for royalty was a very simple one, and contained practically only two articles of faith :—first, that in a constitutional monarchy the throne must be a power above party ; and secondly, that the destiny of nations is determined by moral causes. This has always been the Queen's Confession of Faith. By her fidelity to the first article she has been a wise and just ruler ; in recognition of the second she has been a good woman.

1. It was not an easy lesson for the somewhat wilful maiden to learn that she was to represent a power quite remote from party. But her prophet-teacher had dreamed of a constitutional monarchy in which democracy should be harmonized with the throne ; and he inspired his pupil with his ideal. That best of all teachers, experience, reminded her with greater severity of her duty as a sovereign ; and it was not long before she laid aside all her prejudices and self-will, and abandoned herself unreservedly to this ideal of government. Her reign has many examples of how she readily sacrificed her own views in giving sanction to the expressed will of her subjects. Nothing has had a greater influence in making popular with her people the form of government under which we live than the fact that the

Queen has ever stood for national unity—that she has been the one political power in the nation which is dissociated from the petty squabbles and ignoble sacrifices of party. She recognizes fully and confesses frankly that in the Empire over which she presides the will of the people is the ultimate authority. The people's decision may be wrong, but it is binding. To this fundamental principle in which she was early schooled, she has ever given her complete allegiance; and many cases are on record of her sacrifice of personal feeling and private opinion in the exercise of her royal prerogative.

So consistent has she been in living up to this article of her creed that the idea has sometimes gone abroad that our Sovereign is only a figure-head, a sort of Chinese Mandarin, one who mechanically nods assent to the will of the people as expressed in the proposals of her ministers. This is far from the truth. Time and again by the exercise of her royal office, has the Queen warded off national disaster. More than once has she prevailed upon political leaders to abandon a party victory for the sake of the national welfare. The temptation is very great to such men to use their power in the interests of party, regardless of the effect upon the weal of the whole community. When the national interests have been endangered by party conflicts, the Queen has ever urged moderation upon political leaders and the responsible use of the power entrusted to them. In one very notable case when a dead-lock was threatened between the Lords and Commons, the Queen prevented the disaster by firmly reminding the leaders of the House of Lords that the will



of the people must be safe-guarded as the ultimate source of political authority, and by prevailing upon the leaders of the House of Commons to act in a statesman-like spirit of conciliation.

The right queenly dignity with which the maiden entered upon the discharge of her high duties left no doubt upon the minds of her people that she felt herself to be the sovereign, and realized the tremendous responsibility which devolved upon her. She has never forgotten that the ministers of the crown are directly responsible to her. It was a matter of surprise to her early advisers to find that the girl Queen would sign no documents of which she did not understand the meaning and significance. Unlike her predecessors, she demanded a minute explanation of all state business; so that her first prime minister said laughingly, and no doubt proudly, that he would rather deal with ten kings than one queen. She has spared herself no pains to become thoroughly acquainted with all the matters submitted to her for approval, and in the discharge of her high function she has known no rule but duty. When one of her ministers suggested that she sign a document on the ground of expediency, she quietly but firmly said: "I have been taught to judge between what is right and what is wrong; but 'expediency' is a word I neither wish to hear nor to understand." When another of her ministers, who had taken her some papers to sign, mentioned having arranged them so as to give Her Majesty less trouble, she replied: "Never mention the word 'trouble,' only tell me how the thing is to be done and done rightly, and I will do it if I

can." This is the principle she has ever acted on—to do her work rightly and to do it well, never sparing herself trouble or responsibility. During these three score years, pressing as have often been her domestic duties—and she never neglected them—heavy as has often been the burden of sorrow which she carried in her heart, she has never shirked the duties of the Queen. There has been no interregnum. Not for a moment have the duties and prerogatives vested in the throne been given into the hands of another. During all these years, she has personally, laboriously and honorably discharged the responsibilities of her office. Late into the night oftentimes, and early again at morn, has she been at work, studying intricate questions of state diplomacy and mastering the details of organization in the various departments of her government. History gives us few examples of such a life, unflinchingly dedicated to goodness in the high seriousness of youth, and continuously devoted for so many years to the public service. The girl was mother of the woman. When at twelve years of age she was told that she was the probable successor to the throne, after a moment's pause, she said—and what remarkable words are these from a little girl—"There is much splendor but there is more responsibility"; and lifting her right hand she added: "I will be good." When at eighteen years of age she was told that she was queen, with tears in her eyes she said "Pray for me," and then asked for two hours of solitude with God and her own soul. To that childish resolve, "I will be good," she has not been disloyal; and prayer has been the secret of her strength.

Those were solemn words, expressive of a solemn trust, which the Archbishop addressed to the youthful queen on the day of her coronation:—"Receive this kingly sword, brought now from the altar of God. . . . With this sword do justice, stop the growth of iniquity, protect the holy church of God, help and defend widows and orphans, restore the things that are gone to decay, maintain the things that are reformed, punish and reform what is amiss, and confirm what is in good order ; that doing these things you may be glorious in all virtue, and so faithfully serve our Lord Jesus Christ in this life that you may reign forever with Him in the world which is to come." But these sacred words have not been profaned by her. She has turned them into holy action ; and they have inspired her to do her duty faithfully and courageously, and to devote the power, entrusted to her by God, to the cause of right and to the welfare of the human race. In early life she learned the great lesson of responsible government, and during her long and busy reign she has

"Taught Prince and Peer that power was but a trust,  
And rule alone that served the ruled was just."

II. The second article in the Confession of the Queen is this : that moral causes decide the destiny of nations. The rise and fall of European powers within her own lifetime has confirmed her in this belief—that the wages of sin is death, and that that society alone can last which observes the fundamental principles of morality and religion. Like every true patriot, she has mourned her people's guilt far more than her nation's woes ; and she has devoted her life to the

moral and spiritual elevation of her subjects. She has been wise to discern what are the pillars of the state—the principles and institutions which are essential to national greatness, without which society is ready to perish. We may safely say that personal integrity, the social spirit, the family, and religion, are among the elements which form the bed-rock of social stability ; and wherever the Queen's influence has been felt it has promoted individual righteousness, deepened the sense of universal brotherhood, purified domestic life and supported the institutions of religion.

*Personal righteousness* on the part of its members is a prime requisite of the enduring greatness of a nation ; and of this the Queen has set a splendid example to her people. Even in "the fierce light which beats upon a throne," her private life appears almost without a stain. She is an emblem to the world of what is pure and good and true. No suspicion has been cast by her critics upon her personal worth. Her subjects have had many touching examples of her womanly sympathy, but they who have come in contact with her on business of government have always been most deeply impressed by the rugged truthfulness of her nature. In very early life the Queen was trained in habits of strict personal integrity, and this training drew forth from her responsive nature an almost puritan conscientiousness. Even her quaker statesman, whose traditions bound him to literal exactness of word and deed, confessed that the trait of the Queen's character, of which he carried away the most vivid impression, was her transparent truthfulness.

The financial side of truthfulness is honesty, and the influence of the Queen in this respect has been wholly good. She is scrupulous in regard to money matters, and has ever made a conscientious use of her wealth. The rigid economy of her life has been a fruitful rebuke to the vulgar display and ostentatious extravagance of many of her subjects. What a timely lesson to a prosperous and materialistic age ! Is not this the key to the social problem of our time ? The unrest, which is at the bottom of the social scale and which threatens the stability of society, is not merely or chiefly the result of poverty. The social discontent of to-day represents a moral protest against the inequality of human life ; and nothing has done more to make this inequality prominent, and thereby to breed in the breasts of the poor a rankling sense of injustice, than the wicked extravagance of the irresponsible rich. Our Queen has taught the lesson that money is a sacred trust, that economy is no disgrace ; and by her conscientious use of her possessions she has kept even the poorest of her people among the most loyal to her person.

*The social spirit* is another quality which is indispensable to national unity and stability. The growth of the sense of social service has been phenomenal during the present reign. It is almost an entirely new contribution of our age to civilization. And what an influence has been our Gracious Queen in uniting all her subjects in the bonds of social affection ! The motherly interest with which she has watched over the fortunes of her people, her rejoicing with them in their joys, her weeping with them in their sorrows, have sent the warm flood of human brotherhood coursing through

the arteries of the empire. If a wail of distress arises from any remote quarter of the wide realm, it touches the heart of the Sovereign and draws forth a sympathetic response from the many millions of her subjects. How very beautifully was this spirit of the Queen shown in connection with the present Jubilee ! It was the desire of all her loyal people to erect some worthy monument which would tell to future generations the renown and glory of Victoria. In the past how have the great and good generally been commemorated ? Architecture and sculpture and painting and the kindred arts have been called into service to immortalize those whose memory men wished to keep alive. But no such thought came to the mind of the Queen. It was of others she thought rather than of herself. From her high position she has been watching for many years with tender sympathy the hard and unequal struggle of the poor ; and when consulted as to the form which the jubilee should take, her instinctive reply was : " Let it all take the shape of charity. Give your offerings to the poor and lowly ; bring salvation to them that are ready to perish. Relieve so far as possible the ugly inequalities of human society and let God's gifts be more equitably distributed among his children." This has ever been the Queen's spirit ; and hence the love even of the humblest in her realm is hers. When we read the history of the French Revolution, which was essentially a social revolution, brought about by the irresponsible extravagance and luxury of the Court, we realize what a debt we owe not only to the purity and economy of the Queen's life but also to her sense of obligation as a member of the

social organism. This spirit manifested by the Sovereign has done much to preserve the stability of the state in the midst of social agitations. This is doubtless the reason, to a large degree, why, amid all the social conflicts of her reign, there has seldom been in the minds even of the most violent agitators any serious thought of governmental revolution. The most radical of social reformers have not uttered words of disloyalty to the Queen, because they have known that if her spirit of social service and affection were caught by her subjects everywhere, there would result peace in industrial life, mutual good will, and justice between man and man.

Another safeguard of the nation is the *family*, and the Queen has sought to present to her people the example of a "modest, refined, and self-respecting home life." Where in the Empire could be found a more faithful wife and mother? The duties of state, however engrossing, never hindered her being to her children a companion and guide. Who of us has read the story of her Life in the Highlands and not been touched by her care for those who were dependent on her? A faithful and trusted servant she loved to reward; and among her tenderest words are those in which she mourned the death of an attendant as the loss of a friend.

Her married life was what it ought to be. Her husband was her counsellor, critic, friend. Together they pursued, in perfect harmony, the same worthy ends. He had her complete confidence in matters of state business, and they were

"Everywhere  
Two heads in council, two beside the hearth,  
Two in the tangled business of the world,  
Two in the liberal offices of life."

How truly she found in her husband her "dearest life in life" is shown by the crushing blow inflicted by his death and the lasting loneliness of her widowhood, intensified by the very isolation of her position. It has sometimes been hinted that the Queen has made too much of her bereavement, and that by absorption in her own sorrow she has lost sympathy with her people. The best answer to such a charge is in the noble words of John Bright: "A woman, be she Queen of a great realm, or be she the wife of one of your laboring men, who can keep alive in her heart a great sorrow for the lost object of her life and affection, is not likely to be wanting in a great and generous sympathy with you." The grief of the widowed Queen has been so genuine and unaffected that it has touched a chord of universal sympathy. She has a nature peculiarly sensitive to suffering, and she has not been exempt from great personal sorrow; but it has not made her selfish. It has only made her more responsive to others' grief, and one of her strongest claims upon the affection of her subjects is that she is a

"Queen as true to womanhood as queenhood,  
Glorying in the glories of her people,  
Sorrowing with the sorrows of the lowest."

The last stronghold of the nation, to which I shall refer, is *religion*, and this aspect of the Queen's character is quite significant. Opinions may differ as to whether the Queen is a good church-woman; there can be no difference of opinion as to her personal religion. Under certain circumstances there may be truth in the saying: "The better churchman, the poorer christian." There is perhaps no spirit



which is more utterly remote from the mind of Jesus than the ecclesiastical temper, dogmatic, intolerant, exclusive. To this spirit the Queen is a total stranger. She is the temporal head of the Church of England ; but so zealous is she for that worship which is in truth that she refuses to have the Athanasian Creed read in any of her chapels. It was her request that the Jubilee service in London be held in the open air. She recognizes that the Father of mankind may be worshiped as sincerely and acceptably under the canopy of heaven as within the walls of the cathedral. It is also characteristic of the Queen's religion that she finds so attractive the dignified simplicity of the Presbyterian form of worship, and that for many years she has joined in the Scotch communion service. While at Balmoral she worships in company with her humble Highland neighbors ; and last year she saw no unfitness in taking with her to the little Presbyterian church at Crathie her advisers who were of the Anglican communion, and the Czar of Russia who is accustomed to worship according to the stately ritual of the Greek church. The Queen's religion is one of life rather than of creed ; of spirit rather than of ritual. Yet she is not latitudinarian. The religious teaching which she gave her children should be that of every Christian home. While she did not explain to them the differences of the creeds, she taught them to look up in loving trust to God as their heavenly Father ; and while she did not dwell at length on the supernatural features of the Christian faith, she instructed them in its pure and comprehensive morality. To the essential articles of faith, to the indestructible elements of

religion, she has not been disloyal. She is wise enough to recognize that creeds must vary in various stages of human development, but that the purity of Christ's religion is the only source of lasting happiness and the safeguard of national prosperity.

For Victoria, then, as Queen and Woman, we do well to give thanks to God to-day, for in her life have been combined in a remarkable degree queenly dignity and womanly simplicity. Her throne has been established in the hearts of her people by her official and personal righteousness. What a different thing is loyalty to-day from what it was before her accession to the throne! Then loyalty meant simply attachment to the institutions of the Empire, to-day it means attachment to a person. Then loyalty was a principle, now it is a passion. The loyalty which prompts her people to celebrate her glorious reign springs from profound admiration of her as a Queen, and affectionate regard for her as a person. Her many millions of subjects, scattered everywhere over the earth's surface, composed of various races and diverse creeds, unite to-day in fervent thanksgiving to the King of Kings for her whom, though many of us have not seen, we love; and in laying at her feet a tribute of mingled pride and affection, because she stands for what is best in private, domestic and social life, and because we discern in her long and laborious reign

“The holy pride of good intent,  
The glory of a life well spent.”

History will record the marvelous progress of civilization throughout the Empire during the Victorian Era, the

growth of the spirit of social service, the increased welfare of the masses, the elevation of moral, intellectual and material standards ; but the careful student of this period will recognise that this progress has been in no small measure due to her who presided over the government of the Empire, and from her lofty position presented to her people the example of the noblest virtues for an age of peace—plain thinking and high living.

“She wrought her people lasting good.

Her court was pure ; her life serene ;  
God gave her peace ; her land reposed ;  
A thousand claims to reverence closed  
In her as Mother, Wife, and Queen.”